

Serial No. 10/656,871

Attorney Docket No. 26C-024-RCE

REMARKS

The applicants acknowledge and appreciate receiving an initialed copy of the form PTO-1449 that was filed on 24 November 2004.

Claims 1 and 4-7 are pending. Claims 2, 3 and 8 have been canceled. The applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1, 3-5 were rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Tanase *et al.* Claim 3 has been canceled and will not be discussed. As for claims 1, 4, and 5, the applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn for the following reasons.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the features of claim 3. Additionally, claim 1 now includes the features that the non-admissible portions are arranged along the front-rear direction of the vehicle and that the protection portions are closed from the gas feed passage entirely between the vertical passages by the non-admissible portions. These features are illustrated in Fig. 3 and involve no new matter.

The patent to Tanase *et al.* fails to show the features of claim 1. In particular, in claim 1, each protection portion is surrounded in four sides by the gas feed passage, the vertical passages and the communication passage. In other words, the gas feed passage is arranged on the upper side of the protection portions, vertical passages are arranged on the front and rear side of the protection portions, and the communication passage is arranged on the lower side of the protection portions. The claimed protection portions receive inflation gas only via the vertical passages arranged on the front and rear sides of the protection portions, because the upper side of the protection portion is closed from the gas feed passage by the non-admissible portions. Each

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protection portion comprises a plurality of vertical inflatable portions juxtaposed in the front-rear direction. Such protection portions as claimed are not disclosed in Tanase *et al.* Therefore, the rejection of claim 1 based on Tanase *et al.* should be withdrawn.

Claim 4 has been amended to include the features that the non-admissible portions are arranged along the front-rear direction of the vehicle and that the protection portions are closed from the gas feed passage entirely between the vertical passages by the non-admissible portions. In addition, claim 4 recites that the front-rear dimension of each transverse inflatable portion is greater than its vertical dimension when the inflatable portions are expanded. These features are shown in Fig. 10 and do not involve new matter.

In claim 4, each protection portion has a plurality of transverse inflatable portions juxtaposed in the vertical direction. The front-rear dimension of each transverse inflatable portion is greater than its vertical dimension when the airbag device is inflated. Each protection portion receives inflation gas only via the vertical passages arranged on its front and rear side, since the upper side of each protection portion is closed from the gas feed passage by the non-admissible portions. Such a structure of the protection portions is not shown or suggested by the patent to Tanase *et al.* Therefore, the rejection of claim 4 based on Tanase *et al.* should be withdrawn.

Claim 5 has been amended to include the features that the non-admissible portions are arranged along the front-rear direction of the vehicle and that the protection portions are closed from the gas feed passage entirely between the vertical passages by the non-admissible portions. In addition, claim 5 now recites that the spottedly arranged non-admissible portions are arranged to define a plurality of parallel lines that extend along the front-rear direction of the vehicle and that the spottedly arranged non-admissible portions of one of the parallel lines are located

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between the spottedly arranged non-admissive portions of an adjacent one of the parallel lines. These features are illustrated in Fig. 15 and do not constitute new matter.

In claim 5, the protection portions include a plurality of spottedly arranged non-admissive portions. The spottedly arranged non-admissive portions are arranged to form a plurality of parallel lines. The spottedly arranged non-admissive portions in one line are arranged between the spottedly arranged non-admissive portions of an adjacent line. As a result, trifurcated inflation tops are formed between the spottedly arranged non-admissive portions. Such a structure of the protection portions is not shown or suggested by the patent to Tanase *et al.* Therefore, the rejection of claim 5 based on Tanase *et al.* should be withdrawn.

Claims 6 and 7 were rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Enders. The applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn for the following reasons.

Claim 6 has been amended to include the feature that the cover portion covers the inner side of the inflator entirely in the front-rear direction and the up-down direction of the vehicle. This feature is shown in Figs. 8 and 13 and involves no new matter.

In claim 6, upon deployment of the airbag, the inner side of the inflator is covered by the cover portion of the roof-ward shielding portion entirely in the front-rear direction and the up-down direction. Therefore, if an occupant contacts the vicinity of the inflator, the occupant would contact the inflated cover portion.

In Enders, upon deployment of the airbag, a part (84) of the inflator (26) is covered by the airbag (10). However, in Enders, the inner side of the inflator (26) is not covered entirely by the inflated airbag (see Fig. 1 of Enders). Therefore, the claimed airbag cover portion is not disclosed or suggested by Enders, and the rejection of claim 6 should be withdrawn. Claim 7 depends on claim 6 and is thus considered to be patentable for the same reasons.

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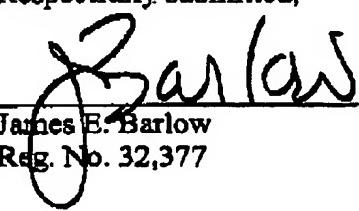
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Other minor changes have been made to the claims for purposes of clarification and not in response to the rejection. For example, the preamble of each of the independent claims has been amended for purposes of clarification.

In view of the foregoing, the applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. A timely notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If questions relating to patentability remain, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone.

Please charge any unforeseen fees that may be due to Deposit Account No. 50-1147.

Respectfully submitted,



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